

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1040

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0615

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA BM

SUBJ: VISIT BY GENERAL TIN OO

REF: STATE 025680

1. I APPRECIATE THE CONSIDERATION GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT TO OUR SUGGESTION THAT GUB DEFENSE MINISTER AND CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL TIN OO BE INVITED FOR A TOUR OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR HISTORICAL SITES DURING THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR. EXCEPT FOR PRESIDENT NE WIN HIMSELF, GENERAL TIN OO PROBABLY HAS MORE CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN INTERESTS IN BURMA THAN ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL WHO MIGHT BE ACCESSIBLE TO US. ACCORDINGLY, WHILE TIN OO IS A RATHER INFORMAL PERSONALITY, AND WHILE HE IS GENUINELY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AND DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, WE WOULD LIKE NOT ONLY TO GIVE HIM A TOUR OF THE MOST FAMOUS REVOLUTIONARY WAR BATTLEFIELDS, BUT ALSO TO SHOW HIM AS MUCH DEFERENCE AND RESPECT AS IS POSSIBLE WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF AVAILABLE PROGRAMS. WE REALIZE THE IMPOSSIBILITY AT THIS TIME OF AN INVITATION FROM GENERAL TIN OO'S CIVILIAN COUNTERPART, THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, BUT WE ARE A LITTLE DUBIOUS ABOUT A DEPARTMENT OF ARMY INVITATION, AS THAT WOULD BE BELOW THE LEVEL OF GENERAL TIN OO'S ACTUAL MILITARY COUNTERPART, I.E., THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.

2. WE WOULD ACCORDINGLY APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S EXPLORING WITH ISA THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT UNDER JCS SPONSORSHIP, OR, EVEN BETTER, UNDER SOME FORM OF COOPERATIVE SPONSORSHIP BY CU AND JCS. WHILE CU WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SPONSOR A VISIT BY TIN OO IN HIS MILITARY CAPACITY, IT

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MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO SO IN HIS MINISTERIAL

ROLE. JCS SPONSORSHIP, WITH A COURTESY CALL ON THE SECRETARY OF

DEFENSE, WOULD SATISFY THE PROPRIETIES SO FAR AS TIN OO'S MILITARY RANK GOES. IF, WITH CU'S HELP, A SPECIAL TOUR OF HISTORICAL SITES COULD BE LAID ON THAT WOULD BRING HIM INTO CONTACT WITH HIGH LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND FELLOW REVOLUTIONARY WAR BUFFS, THIS MIGHT SATISFY THE PROPRIETIES ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE. TIN OO IS ONE OF THE MORE PERSONABLE FIGURES IN THE GUB, A MAN OF SOME CHARISMA, WITH GOOD ENGLISH, AND RELATIVELY BROAD INTERESTS -- WELL WORTH A SPECIAL PROGRAMMING EFFORT.

3. WE REALIZE THAT CU PARTICIPATION IN FUNDING A VISIT WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE POSSIBLE BEFORE THE TRANSITIONAL QUARTER, BUT THE JULY-SEPTEMBER TIME FRAME WOULD PROBABLY BE BEST FROM OUR STAND-POINT ANYWAY. CU GRANT PROCEDURES HERE ARE CUMBERSOME, REQUIRING THAT A NOTE BE SENT THE FOREIGN OFFICE OFFERING THE GRANT BUT NOT SPECIFYING THE RECIPIENT (WE COULD COUNT ON TIN OO MAKING SURE THAT HE WAS DESIGNATED). IN ANY CASE, CAREFUL ADVANCE DISCUSSIONS WITH TIN OO ABOUT THE PROGRAM FOR HIS VISIT WOULD BE DESIRABLE. WITH REFERENCE TO FUNDING, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT THE BURMESE WOULD QUITE POSSIBLY WANT TO PAY THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL THEMSELVES.

4. I WOULD APPRECIATE AN EARLY REPLY IN PRINCIPLE: I.E., WHETHER A JCS INVITATION PLUS SPECIAL CU PROGRAMMING FOR A TAILOR-MADE TOUR OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR SITES WOULD BE POSSIBLE. IF IT WOULD BE, I WOULD HAVE NO HESITATION IN RAISING THE MATTER WITH GENERAL TIN OO, TO GET HIS INITIAL REACTION. ON BALANCE, I WOULD BE DUBIOUS ABOUT EVEN SUGGESTING A VISIT UNDER AUSPICES BELOW THE JCS LEVEL. OSBORN

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